



Bearded Dragon

Natural History

Common Name: Inland Bearded Dragon, Central Bearded Dragon

Scientific Name: *Pogona vitticeps*

Lifespan

- Roughly 5 – 10 years; captive record ~14 years

Size

- 24” for males; 20” for females, males are typically larger and heavier than females

Distribution

- In general, bearded dragons are found throughout all but portions of northern Australia. Inland bearded dragons are found in central and southern Australia

Habitat

- Wide variety of habitats including arid and subtropical forest, savanna, scrubland, and deserts

Habits

- May climb high in trees
- Diurnal
- Basks on rocks and develops territories and hierarchies
- Displays dominance head bobbing (males) and submissive arm waving (females)

Diet

- Wide variety of invertebrates, especially termites, occasionally small vertebrates, small lizards, snakes, and young rodents (61%)
- Leaves and leafy vegetables rich in n3 FAs (16%), flowers, leaves of flowering plants





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Captive Care

Housing

- 30" X 24" or equivalent area minimum for adults. Young dragons 10 gallon tank or equivalent area
- Substrate can be newspaper, cypress mulch, orchid bark, reptile carpet, tile, slate, no substrate, *avoid cedar chips, gravel or sand!*
- Sturdy water dish – water must be available at all times, misting cycle (daily or a few times a week)
- Two hide boxes (warm side, cool side)
- Branches or elevated platform for basking
- Secure outside cage/pen during summer months extremely beneficial to get unfiltered sunlight

Temperature and Lighting

- Ambient cage temperatures in 80's F, with "hot area" of 90 to 120 F. Provide heat gradient
- "Hot area" can be achieved by using radiant heat, heat pad on outside of cage, or both
- Lighting can be dome lamp with incandescent bulbs for heat as well - 12 hr cycle
- UVB lighting necessary, must be unfiltered, bulb within 6 -12" of lizard, bulb changed every 4 – 6 months even if light still works
- Thermometer (temp gun or probe) to measure actual temperature is a necessity
- Adjustable temperature heat pads, thermostat and/or rheostat for any heat source is beneficial
- Secure outside cage/pen with unfiltered sunlight extremely beneficial

Diet

- Omnivorous (carnivorous 60 – 80% of diet, herbivorous rest of diet), pelleted diets, feed daily*
- Variety of insects: crickets, dubia roaches, mealworms, superworms, silkworms, hornworms, wax worms, pinky mice, whole prey cased links (with fruit and vegetable option)
- Dark leafy greens romaine, collared, mustard, dandelion, escarole, endive, alfalfa, squash, bell peppers, prickly pear cactus leaves, hibiscus, pumpkin, flowers
- Avoid vegetables high in oxalates (spinach, broccoli, carrots, etc.)
- Supplemental vitamins and minerals necessary (calcium/phosphorus ratio), gutload insects

Special Notes

- Several diseases, mostly related to improper nutrition. Metabolic Bone Disease most common
- Best kept singly, especially males
- Widely bred in captivity; many different captive produced color morphs known; mostly we get wild type coloration coming in for adoption rather than morphs, watch for discoloration from colored sand

